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General and complete disarmament

Relationship between disarmament and development

Report of the Secretary-General**

Addendum

Information received from Governments

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[9 July 2002]

Views of the Government of the Republic of Cuba pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 56/24 E

The tragic reality afflicting millions of people throughout the world shows how much remains to be done in terms of social and economic development, particularly in the developing countries. At the Millennium Summit, the international community agreed on important targets for reducing poverty, with the aim of eradicating it. Accordingly, it is a matter of priority to implement concrete measures to redirect resources dedicated to military purposes to development-generating activities.

For Cuba, work on behalf of the well-being and comprehensive development of the Cuban people has been a steady feature of the past 43 years. Below are some figures that corroborate this:

- Primary school enrolment rate: 100 per cent
- Secondary school enrolment rate: 99.7 per cent
- Illiteracy rate: 0.2 per cent
- Infant mortality: 6.2 per 1,000 live births
- 590 doctors, 743 nurses and 630.6 hospital beds for every 100,000 inhabitants
- Life expectancy at birth: 76 years.

These and many other achievements have been possible in the midst of a climate of unceasing hostility and actual war imposed on Cuba by successive United States administrations, which have not hesitated to resort to armed aggression, sabotage, terrorist acts and an economic, trade and financial blockade, among other actions.

This aggressive policy has forced our country to dedicate significant material, financial and human resources to defending the independence, sovereignty and security of the country. Under other circumstances,

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those resources might have been used entirely for social and economic development programmes.

Cuba supports the complete elimination of weapons of mass annihilation and shares the concern of most countries at the lack of progress in nuclear disarmament. Because of this situation, a vast quantity of resources continues to be wasted in this area, rather than being used for the benefit of humanity.

Cuba highly values the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), particularly its specific contributions, from which Cuba has amply benefited, to international cooperation in the peaceful uses of atomic energy, as stipulated in its Statute.

We reject any attempts to place conditions on the Agency's cooperation programmes, as that would be contrary to the objectives, functions and founding principles of IAEA.

Cuba is a party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (Biological Weapons Convention) and to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (Chemical Weapons Convention). Within the framework of these Conventions, Cuba has championed the establishment of suitable mechanisms for channelling resources into the peaceful uses of biotechnology and the chemical industry.

Cuba opposes the imposition by States parties to these Conventions of arbitrary and selective restrictions, through parallel export control mechanisms contrary to international cooperation in peaceful uses, as promoted by the relevant international legal instruments.

Cuba possesses neither biological weapons nor chemical weapons. The resources used in the biotechnology industry and the chemical industry fall under the nation's social and economic and scientific and technological development programmes, and are in compliance with all the national and international safeguards and controls in force, so that their use for exclusively peaceful purposes is guaranteed.

It must be recalled that in 2001 the negotiating process for a verification protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention was interrupted. During that process, proposals for a possible strengthening of the Convention, including international cooperation initiatives that would have enhanced the relationship between disarmament and development, were discussed.

Within the framework of the Chemical Weapons Convention, Cuba is in favour of establishing a mechanism for the implementation of concrete measures to promote social and economic development among its members.

The Chemical Weapons Convention has proved to be a paradigm as far as the implementation of measures to promote the relationship between disarmament and development is concerned. Cuba considers that further progress must be made in expanding international cooperation within the framework of the Convention, not only with a view to implementation of the Convention itself, but with greater emphasis on the development of national chemical industries. Just as progress is being made in chemical disarmament and in the retooling of military capacity for peaceful uses, the amounts allocated to cooperation can also be increased.

Cuba hopes that the review process for the Chemical Weapons Convention, which will take place in 2003, will be an opportunity to strengthen the Convention regime, particularly its pillar involving international cooperation in the peaceful uses of the chemical industry.

At the same time, Cuba regrets that recent events within the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, involving the removal of its Director-General, have created a climate that is in no way conducive to the proper discharge of its functions and that could contribute to undermining the Convention regime. The Cuban Government rejects the notion that the policies and priorities of an international organization can be dictated by the unilateral interests of a single State.

If the objectives that gave rise to the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention cannot be fully realized because the establishment of an international regime allowing for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons is prevented, that situation is highly contrary to the well-being of humanity and the development of peoples.

Complete nuclear disarmament would make available a vast quantity of resources that could be channelled into effective programmes in the developing countries, particularly the least developed countries.

thus contributing to international programmes to develop low-cost medicines to combat serious epidemics such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, which each year claim as many lives as the worst wars in world history.

The process under way within the United Nations aimed at preventing, combating and eliminating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects can also become an appropriate framework for promoting measures to enhance the positive synergy between disarmament and development.

The United Nations has undertaken practical actions with favourable results that have provided major benefits to the inhabitants of some regions, thus helping to mitigate the causes and situations that give rise to conflicts.

The question of missiles in all their aspects is currently being debated vigorously. The aforesaid framework also offers an opportunity to further international cooperation in the peaceful uses of missiles, particularly ballistic missiles, which are based on dual-use technology, and for which peaceful uses are closely linked to the exploration and use of outer space for the well-being of humanity.

In Cuba's view, any discussion of international cooperation measures in the area of disarmament and arms control should adequately take into account the economic and social development dimension in each specific field, which should have the same degree of priority as disarmament and non-proliferation measures.

A small part of the colossal sum of money now invested in the production of new weapons designed to kill and the upgrading of existing ones, i.e., approximately $839 billion, could be used to eradicate most of the curable diseases with which humanity is now confronted; achieve the poverty reduction goals that the international community has set for itself; support programmes to eradicate hunger and illiteracy; and even support official efforts for the total cancellation of the external debt now stifling development processes in the countries of the South.

A preliminary measure to stimulate the channelling into development of funds made available through disarmament measures could be the establishment of a tax on the production and international transfers of all categories of arms. The resources thus generated would go into an international fund controlled by the United Nations. Cuba would be willing to discuss and immediately adopt in the General Assembly any initiative of this type.

Denmark on behalf of the European Union

[Original: English]
[11 July 2002]

Common European Union reply to General Assembly resolution 56/24 E

At the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, the member States of the European Union supported the consensus on resolution 56/24 E, entitled "Relationship between disarmament and development". The member States of the European Union wish to provide the following common reply to paragraph 3 of that resolution, which invites the United Nations Member States to communicate to the Secretary-General their views and proposals for the implementation of the Action Programme adopted at the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, as well as any other views and proposals aimed at achieving the goals of the Action Programme, within the framework of current international relations.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union and the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, as well as the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Norway, align themselves with the following common reply of the member States of the European Union to General Assembly resolution 56/24 E:

The European Union continues to attach importance to the Action Programme adopted at the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, and reaffirms its commitments in the fields of disarmament and development. The European Union reiterates its determination to adopt, both individually and collectively, appropriate measures to implement these commitments.